

Addressing Your School's Needs



Success Story:

School: Viroqua High School
District: Viroqua Area School District
Contact: Jennifer Walters, RD,
 Food Service Director
 608-637-1645
 (jwalters@viroqua.k12.wi.us)
 Principal: Kathy Klos
 (kklos@viroqua.k12.wi.us)
 Grades served: 9-12
 Enrollment: 391
 Free/Reduced: 34%
 Breakfast Participation: 50%
 Lunch Participation: 40% (open campus)

During the 2001/2002 school year, Jennifer Walters, Food Service Director for the Viroqua Area School District, realized something had to change with the breakfast program at the high school. Even though they offered breakfast before school, many students were not eating breakfast. However, students were coming down to the cafeteria during the morning to buy food, even though the cafeteria was not open. Jennifer realized that she would have to meet the students' needs another way. She discussed options with the school administration.

The first idea was to offer breakfast in the hallway. She purchased a cart and served breakfast between classes to the students. The cart was a huge success! So much so, that Jennifer had to return to serving breakfast in the cafeteria because she could not meet the demands of so many students from a cart located away from the cafeteria. However, serving breakfast from the cafeteria created staff concerns about the amount of litter

around the school because of the breakfast program. To cut down on litter, the school offered breakfast in the classroom. Each class had a student representative that picked up the breakfast orders from the cafeteria and distributed them to their classmates, who would eat in the classroom. This method resulted in staff concerns around lost teaching time.

Jennifer returned to the drawing board. She discussed various options and models with the staff and principal and came up with another solution. The school decided to schedule a breakfast break in the morning. Currently, there is a scheduled 15 minute break between morning classes. Students can go to the cafeteria during this break, sit, and eat breakfast. A cycle menu is offered as well as the option of cereal each day.

While it is a challenge to come up with creative solutions to serve breakfast that meet students' needs and address staff concerns, the benefits of seeing students eating breakfast far outweigh the challenges. Jennifer's words of advice to others, "Keep trying. If something does not work, try something else. Work with your administration and provide them with options. Get their input and ideas and decide which option you will work on together. It is not easy, but if you're creative it can work." By working with the school administration and trying different serving methods that addressed staff concerns and students' needs, Jennifer was able to raise participation by 300% at the high school.